'Acts of Terror'

THE STATE OF POLICING IN THE country is in such demise that it has completely severed its contact with the people. Most police officers contact the members of the public only to demand bribes. Corruption in the police service is at such levels that even in order to lodge a complaint the complainant has to pay a bribe or to show consent letter form the party leaders in power.

Police brutality is so rampant in the country that the sight of a police uniform is enough to scare an ordinary person, particularly among the poor population. Information, independent of its nature, has to be forced out of the ordinary people. Information obtained under the threat of violence is tainted and cannot be acted upon. Terrorists are different from the ordinary people in the sense that they have money, better training and equipment at their disposal to achieve their goals. They can bribe the police and are allegedly doing so.

The unfortunate "unanimous" passage of the freshly amended Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act is only an indicator of the deep rot in the system. The way it was so hurried passed is almost a rerun of the notorious saga concerning the highly controversial and contested SEZ Act in early 2005. It is no less revealing that during the debates no one reportedly raised the very sensible and in fact obvious demand for a credi-ble public enquiry covering all the aspects of widely alleged intelligence failure, response lags and lapses, who are behind the attack and why to work out a set of thoughtful and rational responses to make the system at least somewhat less vulnerable the next time round; to make the reoccurrence significantly less probable; to make such a tragedy far less costly if it manages to happen nevertheless. There was only chest thumping demagoguery, clamour for draconian laws and war cries all around.

Instead of helping contain terrorism, let alone eradicating, it will only further aggravate social tensions through legitimization of corrupt highhandedness of the police force and targeting of specific segments of the society with full protections of the law. It is perhaps Gorky who had pronounced that if order is injustice then disorder is the beginning of justice.

Only an awakened common citizenry refusing to succumb to the easy lure of ugly blood lust triggered by such disasters as the last terror attack in Mumbai and steadfastly demanding thoughtful actions and radical reforms to prevent recurrence of such shameful failure is the way to get out of the mess. $\Box\Box\Box$